Delineation / Mitigation / Restoration / Habitat Creation / Permit Assistance

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# HABITAT ASSESSMENT AND WILDLIFE CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENT PLAN

#### **FOR**

## SOUNDVIEW TECHNOLOGY CENTER EVERETT, WA

Wetland Resources, Inc. Project #16123

Prepared By
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Prepared For LBG 38 LLC Attn: Ashley Previs c/o Veritas Construction Inc. 22819 Woodway Park Road Woodway, WA 98020

September 2016

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#### LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENT PLAN MAP
LANDSCAPE PLAN PREPARED BY PACLAND

#### **Executive Summary**

**Project Name**: Soundview Technology Center

**Location**: The 39.48-acre subject property is located northwest of the terminus of 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue W, in the City of Everett (Snohomish County tax parcel 28040300200100). The property is bound to the north by development on Debrelon Lane, and to the east by development along the terminus of Sound Avenue and 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue W.

#### Applicant:

LBG 38 LLC Attn: Ashley Previs c/o Veritas Construction Inc. 22819 Woodway Park Road Woodway, WA 98020

#### **Property Ownership:**

LBG 38 LLC 1040W Georgia Street Suite 800 Vancouver, BC V6E4H1 Canada (206) 817-6357

Wetland Resources Assigned Staff: Scott Walters (Associate Ecologist/Wildlife Biologist)

#### **Wetland Resources Contact Info:**

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**Date and Time of Field Visit:** The assessment was conducted between 9am and 2pm on August 17, 2016.

**Purpose of Study**: Development is proposed within a Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area (FWHCA) that provides a continuous vegetative corridor linking Edgewater Creek, Powder Mill Gulch and Japanese Gulch. This Habitat Assessment and Wildlife Corridor Enhancement Plan is intended to satisfy the requirements set forth in the Everett Municipal Code (EMC) section 19.37.190(C)(8)(a)-(l).

**Proposed Project**: To construct a new industrial manufacturing business park and associated infrastructure.

**Critical Areas Determination**: The subject property contains a critical area (FWHCA) because it connects Edgewater Creek/Powder Mill Gulch with Japanese Gulch. Four small wetlands on the property will be filled and have been mitigated through the purchase of credits at a local mitigation bank.

**Critical Areas Findings:** The proposed development will not adversely impact FWHCAs, associated buffers, or listed species, so a Habitat Management Plan is not required.

#### 1.0 Introduction

This habitat assessment is provided to evaluate the biological aspects of the proposed wildlife corridor that is designed to abut the eastern and northern property boundaries of the Soundview Technology Center site in southwest Everett (Snohomish County parcel # 28040300200100). The wildlife corridor constitutes a continuous vegetative corridor linking watersheds, and therefore is a Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area, as identified in EMC 19.37.140(A).

In a letter from the City of Everett Department of Planning and Community Development, dated July 8, 2016, the director, Allan Giffen, said the City shall designate the buffers between industrial developments and residential areas, and those buffers shall act as a wildlife corridor. The width of the proposed wildlife corridor, 75 feet on the north and east sides of the site, is a function of applicable ordinances, previous studies and approvals, our analysis of the site, and the enhancement measures that are proposed within the corridor.

In order to determine an appropriate enhancement plan for the proposed wildlife corridor, a field investigation was performed between 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM on August 17, 2016 to assess the current habitat conditions within the corridor. Direct observations were made throughout the site to assess the vegetative community, as well as identify evidence of specific wildlife species use of the property. Based on the results of the field observations, wildlife enhancement recommendations are provided later within this document. Please see the attached landscape plan for a detailed enhancement planting schematic for the corridor.

#### 1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to construct an industrial manufacturing business park. Four buildings will be constructed, including parking areas and stormwater vaults. Four wetlands will be filled to accommodate the proposed development. Mitigation for wetland impacts has already been achieved by purchasing wetland mitigation bank credits.

A 75-foot wildlife corridor is proposed along the north and east sides of the subject property, coincident with the required setbacks from the adjacent residential areas. A large portion of the proposed wildlife corridor is dominated by invasive species (i.e. Himalayan blackberry; see attached map). Vegetative enhancement of the corridor would provide long-term benefits to the wildlife that may use it. Due to the degraded nature of the corridor and the mass grading required to provide flat, buildable surfaces, side slopes from the proposed grading will continue into the inner 50 feet of the 75-foot corridor. Once grading is complete, the graded areas of the corridor and the non-graded areas that are dominated by invasive vegetation will be enhanced with a variety of native trees and shrubs. These plantings will result in a lift of wildlife habitat functions over those provided by the corridor in its current state. The corridor will be improved, resulting in no adverse impacts to the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Area.

#### 1.2 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

This report is intended to meet the minimum requirements set forth in EMC 19.37.190(C)(8)(a)-(l). The report requirements of subsections (j) and (k) are discussed in great detail within the Biological Evaluation for Soundview Business Campus (Revision 2) and Critical Area Study for Soundview Business Campus (Revision 2), respectively. These documents are on file with the City.

The Biological Evaluation (BE) specifically discusses direct, potential, and cumulative impacts to species resulting from this project (i.e. water quality), as required by EMC 19.37.190(C)(8)(j). This document was submitted, reviewed, and approved by the US Army Corps of Engineers and NOAA Fisheries, and was also submitted to the City of Everett. Detailed discussion of these project elements is not re-stated in this report.

The Critical Area Study specifically discusses mitigation measures that were implemented in order to avoid and minimize adverse impacts to fish and wildlife species, as required by EMC 19.37.190(C)(8)(k). The Critical Area Study was submitted, reviewed, and approved by the City of Everett. Detailed discussion of these project elements is not re-stated in this report. All other minimum requirements are addressed in this report and its attachments.

#### 2.0 HABITAT ASSESSMENT

#### 2.1 STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS

The work for this report was conducted by Scott Walters. Mr. Walters holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Conservation Biology and Applied Vertebrate Ecology. Additional training includes an advanced certificate in Aquarium and Aquatic Sciences, and a post-Baccalaureate certificate in Wetland Science and Management from the University of Washington. Scott has worked on projects across the country for over 8 years, including scientific study of wetlands, environmental restoration monitoring, endangered species monitoring, and shorebird population research.

#### 2.2 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

This habitat assessment is intended as a supplement to the Biological Evaluation and Critical Area Study documents prepared previously for this project. This report is intended to meet specific habitat assessment requirements of the EMC. The assessment was conducted in two parts: 1) review of publicly available information, and 2) field investigation.

#### 2.3 Publicly Available Resources

WDFW Priority Habitats and Species (PHS)

No priority species are identified on the subject site. Two Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) nests are identified northeast of the site. The northeast corner of the site extends slightly closer than 660 feet to the nearer of the two nests. However, the nest location is downslope of the proposed project site, with forested areas in between. Given these factors, the project site is not believed to be visible from the nest. Therefore, only a 330-foot activity buffer is necessary (USFWS National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines), which the proposed project is outside of. This publicly available resource depicts the southwest portion of the subject site as a biodiversity area and corridor. This area will not be impacted by the proposed development.

#### Snohomish County SnoScape

Japanese Gulch is depicted west of the subject site and Edgewater Creek to the east. Both of these streams flow north into Possession Sound. No fish/wildlife environments are indicated on the subject site.

City of Everett Fish & Wildlife Conservation Areas (Critical Areas Map 6)

The steep slope basins of Japanese Gulch and Edgewater Creek are depicted as Urban Natural Open Spaces. A thin wildlife corridor is identified along the northern property boundary. No wildlife species presence is depicted on or adjacent to the subject site.

#### USFWS National Wetland Inventory

No wetlands are depicted on or immediately adjacent to the subject site. Japanese Gulch and Edgewater Creek are depicted off-site in the same locations as identified by *Snoscape*.

#### 2.4 FIELD INVESTIGATION

The site investigation occurred on August 17, 2016. The entirety of the subject site is significantly degraded by a history of disturbance, including logging. Invasive plant species are present across a large portion of the site.

#### 2.4.1 Wildlife Corridor Along Eastern Property Boundary

Invasive Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*) is growing abundantly along the eastern boundary of the site. Near the southeast corner of the parcel, a native vegetation assemblage comprised of Western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), and western sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*) is present just off-site. The middle portion of the eastern property boundary is almost exclusively Himalayan blackberry. A humanuse trail roughly parallels the eastern property boundary within the inner 50 feet of the 75 foot wildlife corridor. This trail connects with a neighborhood to the east, exiting near the northeast portion of the site.

Further north along the eastern property line, the on-site vegetation begins to include salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*), western red cedar, red alder (*Alnus rubra*), and western sword fern.

#### 2.4.2 Wildlife Corridor Along Northern Property Boundary

A primarily native vegetation community is present along the northern property boundary, although Himalayan blackberry is present within the understory here as well. Big-leaf maple (Acer macrophyllum), western red cedar (Thuja plicata), red huckleberry (Vaccinium parvifolium), western sword fern (Polystichum munitum), and native trailing blackberry (Rubus ursinus) are the dominant native species comprising this vegetative community. Himalayan blackberry (Rubus armeniacus) becomes denser moving south, towards the center of the site. A human-use trail roughly parallels the northern property boundary within the inner 50 feet of the 75 foot wildlife corridor, and intersects with the trail paralleling the eastern property boundary discussed in section 2.4.1 above. A topographic depression is present in the northeast corner of the site, which is vegetated with large, mature native trees. Big-leaf maples in this area are especially large. The large trees here and elsewhere along the northern property boundary may serve as legacy trees, providing important forest structure for wildlife life history uses.

The northwest corner of the site is more arid and invasive species comprise a significant portion of this area. Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*), and bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) are the dominant invasive plant species. Native plant species include big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), beaked hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*), Oso-berry (*Oemleria cerasiformis*), bald-

hip rose (*Rosa gymnocarpa*), western sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*), native trailing blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), and red alder (*Alnus rubra*) growing in clusters.

#### 2.4.3 Wildlife Use

Multiple ground holes created by small burrowing mammals (i.e. cottontails, mountain beaver) were observed throughout the wildlife corridor. Scat was found in several locations, confirming the presence of black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), and domestic/feral cat (*Felis catus*). Squirrel activity was observed along the northern boundary, and is expected to occur in all on-site areas with a forested canopy. Several tree cavities where observed in a mature big-leaf maple within the northern side of the corridor that may provide cover for wildlife (i.e. bats). Bird song/calls where detected on-site across the investigation area. However, no evidence of woodpecker use or raptor nests was observed on the subject site.

Mammal species expected to be currently using the wildlife corridor include black tailed deer, eastern cottontail rabbit (Sylvilagus floridanus), mountain beaver (Aplodontia rufa), raccoon (Procyon lotor), Virginia opossum (Didelphis virginiana), voles (Microtus spp.), eastern grey squirrel (Sciurus carolininsus), coyote, and domestic/feral cat. Human-use trails are located within the corridor, which may be used by mammals to cross the site, but no specific mammal-use trails were observed during the site investigation.

Avian species expected to be currently using the corridor include Golden-Crowned Kinglet (Regulus satrapa), Ruby-Crowned Kinglet (Regulus calendula), Song Sparrow (Melospiza melodia), Dark-Eyed Junco (Junco hyemalis), Black-Capped Chickadee (Poecile atricapillus), American Robin (Turdus migratorius), American Crow (Corvus brachyrhynchos), Spotted Towhee (Pipilo maculatus), and potentially Pacific Wren (Troglodytes pacificus). The site is located within the Pacific Flyway, which is a major north/south flyway for migratory birds in America, extending from Alaska to Patagonia.

In some wetter areas, the site may provide habitat for amphibian species [i.e. rough-skinned newt (*Taricha granulosa*), pacific tree frog (*Pseudacris regilla*)] and reptiles [i.e. northwestern garter snake (*Thamnophis ordinoides*)] suited for urban environments.

Habitat for fish species is not present on the subject site.

#### 3.0 WILDLIFE CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENT PLAN

Based on review of publicly available information, no species of local importance, priority species, or endangered/threatened/sensitive/candidate species are likely to be present on or in the vicinity of the subject property. Based on data collected during the site investigation, no species of local importance, priority species, or endangered/threatened/sensitive/candidate species are likely to be present on or in the vicinity of the subject property. Given the absence of priority species, no special management recommendations are employed. No bald eagle nests or roosts or management areas are located within the proposed development.

The proposed wildlife corridor appears to only used by common urban species (identified in section 2.4.3). The following wildlife corridor enhancement plan is designed with this wildlife community in mind.

In order to prepare the subject site for the proposed development, the applicant is proposing to clear and grade the inner 50 feet of the 75-foot wildlife corridor (the portion closest to the development). An in-depth analysis of potential project effects to the subject habitat/environment (i.e. water quality) has been performed, and is described in detail in the *Biological Evaluation for Soundview Business Campus, Revision 2*, prepared by Wetland Resources, Inc. The conclusion of this assessment, which includes numerous parameters, is that the project will maintain all of the existing environmental baseline conditions, including water quality, for both Japanese Gulch Creek and Edgewater Creek. No degradation of water quality or the numerous other pathways and indicators will occur as a result of this project. The addition of grading and enhancement of the wildlife corridors does not change this conclusion. The analysis also concludes that no direct or indirect impacts on the subject habitat are expected. Cumulative impacts of development in the Everett area will result in greater population density. Due to the existing and currently proposed development, cumulative impacts are not likely to cause impacts to the subject habitat.

A large part of the 50-foot strip proposed to be impacted is primarily dominated by invasive Himalayan blackberry. After grading is complete, the entire 50-strip will be planted with native tree, shrubs, and groundcover to create an enhanced vegetative community suitable for wildlife. The outer 25 feet of the wildlife corridor will be cleared of any invasive plant species and enhanced with native tree and shrub species where appropriate (see attached map). The majority of the outer 25 feet along the northern site boundary has a relatively well-established native plant assemblage, with minimal invasive species. Contrastingly, the southern extent of the eastern portion of the corridor is almost entirely dominated by Himalayan blackberry, and will be planted with a greater number of enhancement plantings after the removal of invasive species.

Himalayan blackberry is extremely resilient, and will be removed by uprooting entire plants from the soil. After grading and removal of all invasive plant species is complete, the corridor will be enhanced with the native vegetation species specified below.

In order to provide additional food sources for wildlife, the shrub layer will be comprised of fruit and nut-bearing species that will introduce increased food availability. This shrub layer, together with the ground cover layer and tree canopy, will provide additional cover and structural resources for wildlife species. A focus on increasing the coniferous species was taken in

developing the enhancement plant list. The cover, increased food sources, and improved heterogeneity of the enhanced corridor is expected to improve the probability that wildlife species will utilize the corridor, thus connecting the nearby urban natural open spaces of Japanese Gulch and Edgewater Creek/Powder Mill Gulch.

Existing large trees within the outer 25 feet of the corridor will be retained as legacy trees, providing valuable habitat structure and increased environmental physiognomy.

The southern end of the eastern portion of the corridor will be extended to the south, east of the proposed access road, to connect with the 150' corridor on the Intermec/Boeing property.

Environmentally Sensitive Area signage will be posted along the boundaries of the corridor to discourage human use within this area.

#### 3.1 WILDLIFE HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PLANTING LIST

COMMON NAME	LATIN NAME
Tree Layer	
1. Western red cedar	Thuja plicata
2. Douglas fir	Pseudotsuga menziesii
3. Western hemlock	Tsuga heterophylla
4. Big-leaf maple	Acer macrophyllum
Shrub Layer	
1. Beaked hazelnut	Corylus cornuta
2. Salmonberry	Rubus spectabilis
3. Red-flowering currant	Ribes sanguineum
4. Western thimble-berry	Rubus parviflorus
5. Dwarf Oregon Grape	Mahonia nervosa
6. Oso-berry	Oemleria cerasiformis
7. Snowberry	Symphoricarpos albus
Ground Cover Layer	
1. Western sword fern	Polystichum munitum
2. Salal	Gaultheria shallon
3. Kinnikinnick	Arctostaphylos uva-ursi

A Landscape Plan, prepared by PacLand, is provided as an attachment to this report. The plan provides a detailed planting schematic and plant quantities. Cross sections of the proposed development, including the wildlife corridors, are provided by the project architect.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The 75-foot wildlife corridor along the north and east sides of the site are currently highly disturbed with invasive species. Although the northern boundary has a well-developed native assemblage of plant species, the understory has invasive species, and will need to be enhanced. Human use trails are present within the inner 50 feet of the wildlife corridor, but will be discouraged after enhancement through the posting of Environmentally Sensitive Area signage.

The wildlife corridor enhancement plan provided within this document is designed to increase cover, food sources, and the proportion of coniferous vegetation. These habitat improvements, in combination with removal of invasive species, are expected to significantly improve the quality of the wildlife corridor on the subject site. Improved corridor habitat condition should increase the probability that local wildlife species will utilize the corridor as a connection between nearby biodiversity areas.

As implementation of the proposed wildlife corridor enhancement plan will increase the habitat functions and values of the on-site wildlife habitat conservation area (the designated 75-foot wildlife corridor), the proposed project will not adversely impact this area.

#### 5.0 Use of this Report

This Habitat Assessment and Wildlife Corridor Enhancement Plan is supplied to LBG 38, LLC, as a means of determining on-site habitat conditions, and providing vegetative enhancement to improve on-site wildlife habitat functions and values, as required by the City of Everett during the permitting process. This report is based largely on readily observable conditions and, to a lesser extent, on readily ascertainable conditions. No attempt has been made to determine hidden or concealed conditions.

The laws applicable to wildlife are subject to varying interpretations and may be changed at any time by the courts or legislative bodies. This report is intended to provide information deemed relevant in the applicant's attempt to comply with the laws now in effect.

The work for this report has conformed to the standard of care employed by wildlife ecologists. No other representation or warranty is made concerning the work or this report, and any implied representation or warranty is disclaimed.

Wetland Resources, Inc.

Scott Walters

Associate Ecologist / Wildlife Biologist

South Walters

#### **6.0 REFERENCES**

- Everett, City of. Everett Municipal Code. Title 19, Zoning. Chapter 6, Development Standards Table.
- Everett, City of. Everett Municipal Code. Title 19, Zoning. Chapter 37, Critical Areas.
- Everett, City of. 2006. Fish & Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas. Critical Areas Map 6. March 2006. https://everettwa.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1456
- Snohomish, County of. 2016. SnoScape Interactive Mapping Tool. http://gis.snoco.org/maps/snoscape/
- USFWS. 2016. National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Online Mapper. http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html.
- WDFW. 2016a. Priority Habitat and Species (PHS) Interactive Map. http://apps.wdfw.wa.gov/phsontheweb/.
- Wetland Resources, Inc. 2014. *Biological Evaluation for Soundview Business Campus*. Rev 1. September 15, 2014.

### HABITAT ASSESSMENT AND WILDLIFE CORRIDOR ENHANCEMENT PLAN MAP **SOUNDVIEW TECHNOLOGY CENTER**

PORTION OF SECTION 3, TOWNSHIP 28N, RANGE 4E, W.M.



Scale 1" = 200'

100 200 300

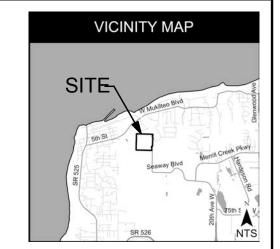
LEGEND

PROPERTY BOUNDARY

INVASIVE PLANTS DOMINANT

NATIVE PLANTS DOMINANT

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR





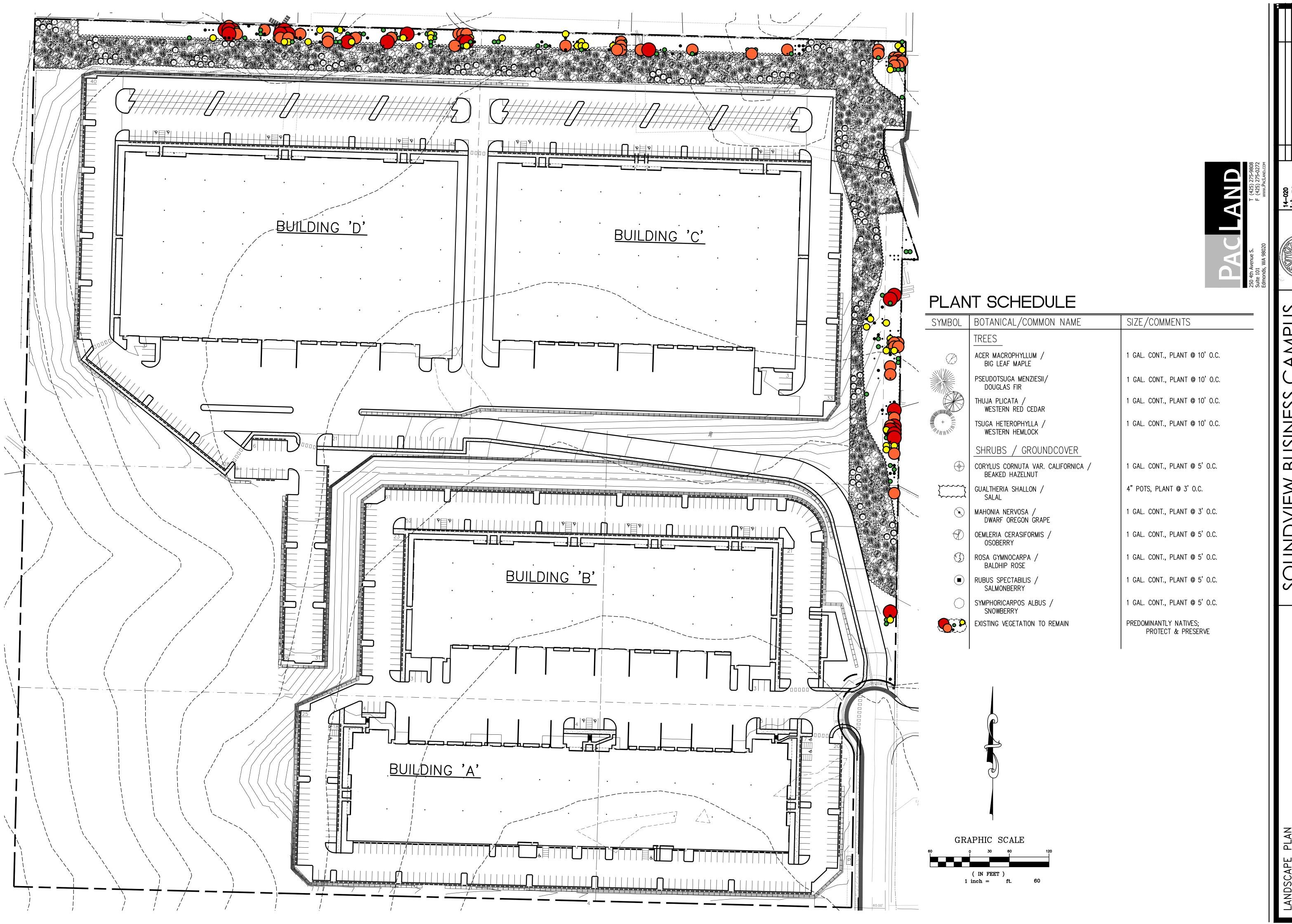
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Habitat Assessment and Wildlife Corridor Enhancement Plan Map SOUNDVIEW TECHNOLOGY CENTER City of Everett

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WRI Job#: 16123 Drawn by: SW Date: September 2016



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